



A Special Edition

FROM THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

The old adage, “The only constant is change,” is never more appropriate than when dealing with running elections! With a major overhaul of Florida’s election laws recently passed by our legislature, I wanted to personally convey the substantive changes to the voters of Pasco. This special edition of Pasco Votes covers the changes to our voting systems (see below), information about a potential special election to address property taxes, the revised date for the 2008 Presidential Preference Primary, along with miscellaneous changes to our election laws (see back page).

As ambassadors of the Supervisor of Elections Office, it is important that you have a solid understanding of the changes to the way we vote in Pasco County. As I have previously stated, my main goal is to administer transparent, problem-free elections with timely and accurate results. I also continue my commitment to the citizens of Pasco County to serve them with integrity and professionalism.

My staff and I stand ready to assist the citizens of our county to ensure a smooth transition with the new voting equipment, but we cannot do this alone. We need your assistance as precinct officials to ensure smooth elections. Working together, we can and will continue to ensure that Pasco County is premiere in running smooth elections.

Again, it is with great honor that I serve as your Supervisor of Elections.

Touchscreen Voting System to be Replaced

As of July 1, 2008, Pasco County voters will begin using optical scan voting machines at the polls on election day and at early voting locations.

Through 2010, the new legislation allows disabled voters to use the touchscreen machines at both the polls and early voting locations, but as of 2012, all voters statewide will be using optical scan equipment.

Voting on an optical scan machine requires voters to fill out paper ballots by “bubbling in” their choices, not unlike the absentee ballots currently used in Pasco. Upon entering the polling place and checking in, voters will be issued paper ballots which they will complete in privacy booths. Before leaving the polling place, the voter will feed their ballot through the optical scanner. The ballot will automatically be cast into a locked box, or rejected and returned to the voter in the case

of under or over votes. Those who over vote will be issued a new ballot, if they want, while those who under vote will have the opportunity to complete their ballot.

Due to Secretary Browning’s request to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) for funding under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), the new voting equipment for the 15 Florida counties that use touchscreen machines, including Pasco County, will be partially financed through federal funds.

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Pertinent Legislative Points

Presidential Preference Primary:

- ◆ Has been moved to January 29, 2008 (the last Tuesday in January) rather than March 11, 2008 (the 2nd Tuesday in March).

Primary Election Date:

- ◆ Has been moved up to 10 weeks before the general election, August 26th, to avoid falling on the Labor Day holiday weekend.

Minor Political Party Primary:

- ◆ Minor political parties must conduct nominating primaries, just like major political parties are required to do.

Photo ID at the Polls:

- ◆ Employee badge or ID and Buyer's Club ID are no longer acceptable forms of ID.

Voter Pre-Registration:

- ◆ Qualified minors may pre-register at age 17, or whenever receiving a valid Florida Driver's license, whichever occurs first. You still must be 18 to vote.

Absentee Ballots:

- ◆ Canvassing may begin 6 days prior to the election (Thursday) rather than 4 days.

Ballot on Demand:

- ◆ Has been authorized for early voting and

- ◆ absentee ballots, and for election-day ballots as authorized by the Secretary of State.
- ◆ This means that a voter's ballot style will be printed as needed at early voting sites, thus eliminating the need to supply quantities of pre-printed paper ballots.

Potential Special Election on Property Taxes:

- ◆ No decision made other than to call a special session beginning June 12th to further discuss property tax relief and reform.

Please note that this recap of the passed legislation only highlights the areas most affected on election day. The total impact of these changes on our procedures has yet to be realized, however, a few things are already evident. Training for the Presidential Preference Primary will start the week of January 7, 2008, and for the Primary Election the beginning of August 2008.

The elections staff will be spending the next few months analyzing the impact and implementing new procedures and training strategies. As things develop, we will keep you updated through future editions of PascoVotes. As always, we appreciate everything you do and look forward to working with you through these changes.

Supervisor of Elections Offices

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